

1. (Once amended) An automated method for staining biological materials on a slide, comprising:

- a) providing at least a first and second stable solution, wherein the at least first and second stable solutions form an unstable staining solution when combined;
- b) providing a slide, wherein a biological material to be stained is present on the slide; and
- c) sequentially applying the at least first and second stable solutions to the biological material on the slide using an automated delivery system.

6. (Once amended) An automated method for silver staining biological materials on a slide, comprising:

- a) providing a first stable solution of from about 0.2% to about 1.0% silver nitrate;
- b) providing a solution of from about 2.0% to about 4.0% methenamine;
- c) providing a solution of from about 0.2% to about 0.6% borax;
- d) providing a slide, wherein a biological material to be stained is present on the horizontal slide;
- e) providing an automated delivery system to deliver a predetermined quantity of the silver nitrate, methenamine, and borax solutions to the biological material on the slide;
- f) sequentially applying the silver nitrate, methenamine, and borax solutions to the biological material on the slide using the automated delivery system; and
- g) mixing the silver nitrate, methenamine, and borax solutions to form an unstable staining solution associated with the biological material.

Add the following new claims 10-12 to the application:

10. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said biological material is selected from the group consisting of tissue sections, tissue culture cells, smears of blood, sputum, body fluids, excretions, secretions, and micro-organisms.

11. (New) The method of claim 10 wherein the biological material is a cell component that is selected from the group consisting of cell organelles, chromosomes, nucleic acids,

carbohydrates, lipids, and proteins.

12. (New) The method of claim 10 wherein the biological material is a micro-organism that is selected from the group consisting of parasites, viruses, bacteria, and fungi.

REMARKS

Claims 1-2 and 4-12 are pending in the application. Claim 3 has been cancelled from the application without prejudice and rewritten as new claims 10-12. In addition, claims 1 and 6 have been amended to clarify the applicant's inventions in response to the Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph. No new matter has been added to the application by way of these claims amendments.

A copy of the marked up claims is attached to this Reply as Appendix A pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121. A clean copy of all pending application claims is attached to this Reply as Appendix B for the Examiner's convenience. Finally, a copy of new application page 25, consisting of the application Abstract is attached to this Reply.

By way of review the applicants have developed automated methods for staining biological materials on a slide with an unstable solution formed from the admixture of two or more stable solutions wherein the two or more stable solutions are admixed after they are applied to a surface containing the biological material of interest.

The Examiner's claim objections and rejections are overcome or traversed as set forth below.

I. The Specification Objection

The Examiner objected to the specification because it does not contain an abstract.

The Applicants have amended the application above to include an abstract as the last page of the application. A copy of the Abstract page is attached to this Reply.